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10/576,443

REMARKS

Claim 6 is objected to for the reason noted in the official action. The above requested claim amendment is believed to overcome all of the raised informalities concerning the claims. If any further amendment to the claims is believed necessary, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned representative of the Applicant to discuss the same.

Next, claims 6 and 14 are rejected, under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), as being anticipated by Galicher '827 while claims 7, 8, 15 and 16 are rejected, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over Galicher '827 as applied to claim 6 and 14 above, respectively, and further in view of Carnagua '944. The Applicant acknowledges and respectfully traverses the raised anticipatory and obviousness rejections in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Initially, the Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating that claim 20 is allowed.

In view of the withdrawal of claims 11 and 17 from consideration as being directed to a distinct invention, those two claims are canceled, without prejudice, from this application.

The Applicant also thanks the Examiner for indicating that claims 12, 13, 18 and 19 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claim(s). In accordance with this indication, dependent claims 12 and 18 are canceled, without prejudice, and the allowable subject matter of those claims is added to independent claims 6 and 14, respectively, such that amended independent claims 6 and 14 are now believed to be allowable. As claims 7, 8, 13, 15, 16 and 19 all depend, either directly or indirectly, from either one of these amended independent claims, those dependent claims are believed to be allowable as well.

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If any further amendment to this application is believed necessary to advance prosecution and place this case in allowable form, the Examiner is courteously solicited to contact the undersigned representative of the Applicant to discuss the same.

In view of the above claim cancellations and amendments, the Applicant respectfully submits that further comments concerning the applied prior art of Galicher '827 and/or Carnagua '944 is not believed necessary. The Applicant also notes the remaining prior art cited in the official action. As none of that additional art is applied by the Examiner against the claims of this application, the Applicant is not providing any comments concerning that art as well.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the raised rejections should be withdrawn and this application is now placed in a condition for allowance. Action to that end, in the form of an early Notice of Allowance, is courteously solicited by the Applicant at this time.

The Applicant respectfully requests that any outstanding objections or requirements, as to the form of this application, be held in abeyance until allowable subject matter is indicated for this case.

In the event that there are any fee deficiencies or additional fees are payable, please charge the same or credit any overpayment to our Deposit Account (Account No. 04-0213).

Respectfully submitted,



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